

Top Secret



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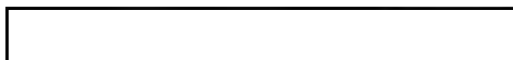
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State Department review completed

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LAOS: The collapse of General Ma's effort to overturn the government may strengthen Prime Minister Souvanna's hand in wrapping up a settlement in Laos. In the early moments of the coup attempt, the US chargé strongly opposed General Ma's action in conversations with both the plotters themselves and key rightist political and military leaders. His words may have been instrumental in discouraging defections to Ma's side. More importantly, they left the rightists with no illusions as to the firmness of US backing for Souvanna and his efforts to form a new coalition government.

Souvanna almost certainly will use the new momentum he has gained from this incident to urge a quick end to right-wing vacillation and opposition regarding the draft accord. The rightists probably will continue to hold out for revisions in the agreement for as long as possible. Nevertheless, they may now realize that a breakdown in negotiations and the consequent resignation of Souvanna would leave the non-Communist side in an untenable political and military position.

Senior Communist negotiator Phoumi Vongvichit, in a conversation with the US chargé, has expressed gratification for the support provided Souvanna by the US, stating that the incident "had clarified the situation" for the Communists.

Souvanna suspects that Ma's abortive coup was part of a plot [redacted] to return former rightist strongman Phoumi Nosavan to power. Phoumi, an inveterate plotter, has been residing in exile in Bangkok since 1965 and may well have been involved or given his blessing to Ma's ill-considered action. [redacted]

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CHILE: President Allende has survived another crisis of confusion, but faces a widespread general strike today.

Air force officers accepted the replacement of their commander in chief General Ruiz last evening, after a tense day of defying the move as a trick by Allende. It is not clear why the disaffected officers backed down [REDACTED]

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Allende's troubles are not over, however. As negotiators claimed that the crippling 26-day truckers' strike was near solution, shopkeepers, professionals, and opposition union members announced they were starting general strikes of varying duration. Christian Democratic leaders are backing the strikes, but the divisions and indecisiveness of the party are seriously weakening its image as the major opposition force.

Allende increasingly appears to be accepting the argument of his hardline political allies that government opponents must be destroyed. The acquiescence of the military is a major asset to him in this effort. [REDACTED]

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ARGENTINA: In a speech formally accepting his presidential nomination and kicking off his campaign, Juan Peron again made a strong pitch for the support of moderates who form the backbone of his diverse movement. The former dictator defended the Peronist administration from charges that it is disorganized and has accomplished little, and he stressed that reconstruction could not be accomplished overnight.

Peron's emphasis on the importance of party unity was intended to reassure the mainstream of his supporters at a time when militant left-wing Peronists reportedly are planning violence to promote their "revolutionary" objectives. By urging "some naive youths" who disagree with the government to be patient until "we are firmly in power," Peron seemed to be holding out the promise of a more revolutionary program. The youth wing has recently grown disillusioned with Peron, his advisers, and his policies--all of which they regard as too "right wing." Meanwhile, Peron left no doubt as to his antipathy for the extreme leftist terrorists when he stated that the task of pacifying the country must continue if disaster is to be avoided.

Speaking without notes for more than an hour, Peron said his movement had weathered 20 years of persecution and is now as solid as a rock. Nevertheless, he warned that it must be consolidated and "institutionalized" so that it can survive him. Peron added that his doctors had given him a clean bill of health, but the statement he read from them suggested that his future activity might well be reduced because of his age and his recent illness.

Hinting that he would avoid past blunders by moving slowly and carefully, Peron recounted the economic mistakes of previous governments and repeated earlier charges that the Peronists had inherited a disastrous situation. He clearly was cautioning those who would push for immediate radical solutions and at the same time appealing for more time to find answers to Argentina's ills.

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FOR THE RECORD*

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Bolivia: The Banzer government has had little trouble in heading off a planned rebellion by armed dissidents in the department of Santa Cruz. The rebels, who were led by an erstwhile supporter of the regime, have reportedly fled toward the Paraguayan and Brazilian borders. [REDACTED]

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Cuba - Trinidad-Tobago: The air agreement signed last week is Cuba's third such pact with another Caribbean nation since June. Cubana Airlines reportedly will begin service to Port of Spain within two months; Trinidad's national airline is scheduled to begin flights to Cuba later. A similar agreement probably will be signed with Jamaica. [REDACTED]

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**These items were prepared by CIA without consultation with the Departments of State and Defense.*

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